

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 13 are presently active in this application. Claims 3-5, 7-12 and 18-27 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The outstanding Action presents an objection to Claim 27 as being improperly multiply dependent, a rejection of Claims 5, 7-12, and 27 under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, a rejection of Claims 5 and 7-12 under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, a rejection of Claims 3, 4, 18, 19, and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Shiozaki (U.S. Patent No. 5,977,477), a rejection of Claims 3-5, 7-12, and 18-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over JP 2001-176334, a rejection of Claims 20 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiozaki, and a rejection of Claims 21 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiozaki in view of Matsuyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,072,117).

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the allowance of Claims 1, 2, 6, and 13.

The outstanding objection to Claim 27 and all the rejections applied as to Claims 3-5, 7-12 and 18-27 are believed to be moot in view of the cancellation of Claims 3-5, 7-12 and 18-27.

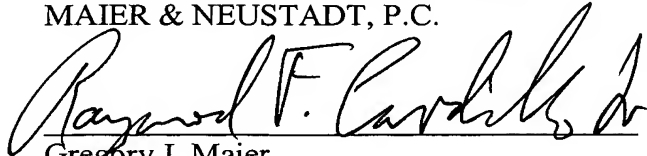
Moreover as this amendment only cancels rejected to and objected to claims, the entry of this Amendment is believed to be in order as it will clearly simplify issues and should place the present Application in condition for allowance with allowed Claims 1, 2, 6, and 13.

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Accordingly, as no other matters are believed to be outstanding, this Application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory J. Maier", is written over a horizontal line.

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